2:Métraux E-5 (1929) 1948 SF10 Chiriguano SF10

Chane SF8

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562

Chieftainship was inherited in the male line, but the title was bestowed on a chief's son only if he were worthy of it. There are only a very few cases of women ruling a *Chiriguano* group, but the *Chané* remembered the names of several women leaders. According to a genealogy of a *Chané* chiefly family recorded by Nordenskiöld (1912, p. 229), power was inherited successively by the brothers and sisters of a deceased chief before it passed to his son. In the village visited by Nordenskiöld, the leading's son of the chieftainess was the actual ruler, but her son by a commoner was the heir apparent. This system of succession is probably the same as the one prevailing among the eastern *Chané* (*Guana*).

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Chiriguano chiefs of the past wore conspicuous ornaments and were entitled to carry the *yandova*, a pole with a bunch of feathers tied at the end, and a carved stick.

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Property.—A plot that had once been cultivated by a man belonged to him and to his descendants, but could not be alienated by him. In order to insure new ownership rights, a *Chiriguano* would plant a few pumpkins on the land which he intended to clear.

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681

Justice.—Thieves were expelled from the community or sometimes were flogged. A man convicted of adultery could lose his property. Murderers were sent into exile, unless the victim's family had time to kill him first. Wronged individuals often took justice into their own hands and challenged the offender to a duel. The settlement of old accounts occurred generally during drinking bouts.

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627

LIFE CYCLE

C

Childbirth.—Soon after childbirth, the mother went to the river to wash and smear herself with urucú. Both parents observed various food taboos. The father rested for a few days on his bed and refrained from any work, lest he harm the baby. One twin, as well as any malformed infant, was killed (Campana, 1902, p. 72).

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Puberty.—Menstrual flow was attributed to the bite of a mysterious serpent. At her first menses a girl was hoisted in her hammock to the roof of the hut, where she was compelled to stay for 5 days without uttering a word. Then she remained for a month or more enclosed in a corner of the hut. Her hair was clipped short, and she was put on a diet of boiled maize. During her seclusion, she spun and wove wool and cotton so that she would be diligent for the rest of her life. Meanwhile, she became pallid, which was greatly admired when she returned to normal life. Henceforth, she used the affirmative "é, é" instead of the childish "ú, ú."

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[195]

In ancient times, the confinement of a pubescent girl lasted for several months or even for a year[1] (Campana, 1902, p. 86).

[1] According to Father Chané (1910 b, p. 302), the pubescent girl was hoisted in her hammock near the roof. During the second month, the hammock was lowered, but the confinement ended only in the third month, when a group of old women entered the hut with sticks to start a symbolic hunt for the serpent that had bitten the girl.

/151 cont./

756 278 682 Mbayachi works quite slowly because in general /152/ the sorceress who administers it is careful to infuse in the drink a small quantity so as to avoid its being discovered by the relatives, but if the hated person has none, or the ones he has are very distant in degree or are of little worth, she gives him a strong dose which dispatches him to eternity in a few hours.

The patient who has had the misfortune to drink the poison begins to feel the effect at once: stomach pains, retching, and other known effects. The poison is consumed little by little, and he remains in this state for two or three years, leading a most painful existence, which is shared by the members of the family in their sadness, as they experience all of the burden of the long illness.

Mbayachi is nothing but a poison, and inasmuch as it can be administered among civilized peoples, there is no reason whatsoever to deny that savages can administer it, since they do not fear human or divine laws, take vengeance as a holy thing, and are only with great difficulty discovered (1).

● [627] [628]

1. The Indian is not content until he has taken revenge on his enemy; when he achieves it, he says: ayepi ma hese. I have avenged myself on him.

Way to Obtain the Poison

756 278 The way to provide oneself with poison is as follows, according to what Guarerai says: The sorceress goes out into the country without telling anyone her purpose. She takes with her a receptacle which generally consists of a little clay jar perforated in the upper part. She goes into the dense woods or forest, where nobody can discover her, covers up her ears and nostrils with cotton and her hands with rags, and undresses completely, so that nothing may disturb her in her work.

/291 cont./

963 tears, because the Indian had taked her as his wife until death, and with his death she loses everything. She will now be poor.

When the death pangs approach, the sick person enjoins them to cry as much as possible, admonitions which are made before he loses the use of speech. The said admonition is not addressed to the one who in a short time is going to be left a widow, but to the relatives and friends, because the widow already knows that she must bewail the absence of the one who was her companion (2).

[578] [297]

2. If the dying man believes that he has been poisoned, before he loses the use of speech he charges his nearest relatives to take vengeance after the days of mourning, if the supposed enemy is known.

The death pangs come, the death rattle begins, his face pales, his nose thins, his lips and tongue become dry, his eyes turn glassy, his eyelids and eyelashes are paralyzed; the dying man begins to grab at his blankets or anything else with his hands, he looks from side to side and seems to be insensible of the objects that surround him. He is about to fade away. Then the persons around him understand how close the fatal moment is. At the impossibility of helping the one who is struggling, who is about to be inert, they begin to utter the wails which are the precursors of death.

They do not have to wait long; the dying man gives a last breath and begins to expire, until his mouth is wide open, which is observed by the widow, who gives a cry, the sign that her 964 husband has now died. Then the funeral formally begins; they dress the deceased in his best clothes, comb him very carefully, paint his face and feet with palm-Christi oil and achiote, double up the knees, put his crossed hands there, and tie him up thus, so that on the day of burial he will easily go into the clay pot that they have prepared beforehand, where they will put him when it is time to be buried.